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## **The Balkans – A Mosaic**

### **Introduction**

In *The Cambridge Encyclopaedia of Language*, chapter dealing with Ethnic and National Identity, p. 37, n° 13, about the Balkan States, David Crystal says that current information on the minority languages in the states formerly comprising Yugoslavia, is unavailable due to the changing political situation in the area since 1991. Varieties of Serbo-Croatian, the former Union language, are still used, but the differences between Serbian and Croatian are now strongly emphasized.

In truth, there is also Slovenian, spoken in Slovenia, and Macedonian, spoken in Macedonia, both of them former Yugoslav republics, situated in the north and south of the country respectively. Moreover, Albanian has an official status in the Autonomous Province of Kosovo, and Hungarian is a minority language in Voivodina, the borderland on the Danube.

In addition, Bosnia-Herzegovina makes the picture of ethnic and linguistic identities still more complex, on account of a certain superposition and interference of ethnic and linguistic differences and similarities in a small area.

The puzzling reality requires some basic clarification from the geographical, historical, ethnic and linguistic point of view.

### **The Balkans or Balkan States**

The Balkans or Balkan States are occupying the Balkan Peninsula, the most eastern of the three southern European peninsulas.

The Balkan Peninsula is bounded by the rivers Danube and Sava in the north-east. It is surrounded by the Adriatic, the Aegean, the Mediterranean, the Sea of Marmara and the

Black Sea. Named after the range of the Balkan Mountains crossing Bulgaria, parallel to the Danube, from the Yugoslav border to the Black Sea, it includes Albania, Macedonia, Greece, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Romania and the European Turkey. Consequently, it is the home to various ethnic groups with different languages and cultures.

Geography apart, when we think of the Balkans, we associate the term with an idea of instability, unrest and conflicting interests, particularly in certain areas of the former Yugoslavia. On the other hand, we don't think of Greece as a Balkan country, although it is part of the same peninsula. Neither do we think of Slovenia and Croatia as of Balkan countries, because they both belong culturally to Central Europe. Many of their leading personalities studied at the universities of Prague and Vienna or in Italy, and were culturally active while living within the frame of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

The whole of the peninsula is, in fact, an ethnic, linguistic and cultural mosaic, produced by migrations and invasions of peoples of different racial origin, by the rise and fall of empires, by the ebb and flow of national awareness and inspired leadership as well as by the changing context of contacts or isolation.

### **Who is who?**

At times, it might be convenient to turn our thought away from the contemporary state of things we know but do not quite understand, back to the past, in search of clarification.

As a matter of fact, there were three Yugoslavias altogether. Croatia and Slovenia were part of the first two.



The first Yugoslavia was a kingdom, created after the First World War, in 1918, by an agreement of *three* Slavic nations, Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia, to be ruled by the Serbian House of Karadjordjević, from the Serbian Capital Belgrade. The original name of the new country was the "Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes." In 1929, it was changed to "Yugoslavia," meaning "The Land of Southern Slavs."

The second Yugoslavia was a restoration of the first, after the Second World War, in 1945. With only slight territorial corrections, it became a union of *six* socialist republics. That is to say that on the same territory, the number of constituent republics was doubled, when Bosnia, Montenegro and Macedonia were officially recognized their individual identities within the Federal State of Yugoslavia.

In the 1990s, this second Yugoslavia was dismembered and survived nominally in the third Yugoslavia, comprising only Serbia, Montenegro and the Territory of Kosovo. The rest of the former Yugoslav republics gained their independence and now they enjoy the status of fully independent nation-states. But the latest change has taken place on February 4<sup>th</sup> this year. After long considerations, Serbia and Montenegro decided to call their Union simply "Serbia and Montenegro," for a greater flexibility. And it is the end of the third Yugoslavia.

Southern Slavs were separated from the main body of the large Slavic language family by the Huns who wedged themselves between the north-eastern and south-western Slavic branch. Coming from the Black Sea, the Huns had overrun much of Europe under Attila, in the middle of the fifth century and later on, until they settled, by 896, in the modern Hungary, known as Hungarians or Magyars.

Yugoslavia had been devised to unite and protect the southern Slavs in accordance with the saying that "Union is Strength." But the

separatist tendencies were strong from the very beginning.

Centripetal forces created Yugoslavia, centrifugal forces destroyed it. Consanguinity certainly worked in favour, while cultural context worked against the acceptance of contingencies of living under the same roof. The breakdown of the centennial Austro-Hungarian imperial frame had changed the political map of Europe providing conditions for totally new options. Right or wrong, decisions had to be taken in one sense or another, although they were in many aspects a matter of opinion, in an uncertain atmosphere.

### Serbo-Croatian

As far as language is concerned, the compound Serbo-Croatian was adopted as name for the compulsory subject matter in secondary school education throughout the new country, according to the principle of homogeneity: one nation-state—one language. But ideas cannot be imposed on people.

The sole existence of a Serbo-Croatian language was questionable, not so much on account of mutual intelligibility, which certainly existed to a high degree, in spite of differences in grammar and vocabulary. It was arousing mistrust because there existed a strong *feeling* against it. Most of the population felt that they spoke a Slavic *language* of their own, not a *dialect*, and many people did not even speak Serbian or Croatian. So, reason, sentiment and a sense of reality, were often pushing in opposite directions. And what is more, the identity process of differentiation had already culminated in important language documentation and in highly qualified literary tradition.

Besides, there was a powerful visual reason in the written language, which split the formula Serbo-Croatian, on account of a different alphabet Serbians and Croats used. The Croatian alphabet is Latin or Roman, while the



Serbian is Cyrillic. The use of different characters was a barrier in itself; they had to be learnt previous to reading and understanding. On the other side, even the same alphabet has to be adapted to the sound-system of every particular language. So, the Cyrillic alphabet, used by Russians, Bulgarians, Macedonians and Serbs is not exactly the same, either in the shape of individual letters or in the number of characters.

The Cyrillic alphabet is named after St. Cyril, but it was actually derived from the Greek alphabet in the ninth century, by two highly educated Greek brothers from Salonica, Sts. Cyril and Methodius, called Apostles of Slavs. Broadly speaking, the Cyrillic alphabet has been adopted by the eastern Slavic nations, belonging to the Orthodox Church, and Latin alphabet by those belonging to the Roman Church, in the West.

### **Ancient Illyrians**

The presence of numerous Illyrian tribes in the Balkans and on the Adriatic Sea, long before the arrival of Slavs and other newcomers in the area, is a historical fact of significance for a better understanding of the early European history. Although they left no written records about themselves, other ancient authors, inscriptions and archaeological finds are pointing at the Indo-European origin of the Illyrian peoples. Coming from the East, they occupied the lands between the Danube, Sava and Drava rivers and the Adriatic Sea, from Fiume (Rijeka) to Durrës (Dyrrachium) in the South. Some of them even migrated over land or sea into Italy. In the North, in what is now Slovenia, on one side, and Veneto, on the other side, they came into contact and mingled with Celts.

Clear traces of Celtic influence have been discovered within the territory of the Japodes, an Illyrio-Celtic tribe, who once occupied part of Slovenia and the Croatian Lika.

The Veneti's Illyrian origin is still controversial since Venetic language and proper names bear little resemblance to their Balkan counterparts. There is, however, sufficient archaeological evidence for Illyrian migrations into Italy. There is also a close resemblance between the name of the Iapyges, neighbours of the Italian Messapi, and the Iapodes of the north-western Balkans.

In the South, Thracians and Macedonians were probably of the same Illyric stock, but they were strongly influenced by the Greek, who established a number of trading colonies in their region. The present day city of Durrës, developed from the Greek colony Epidamnus, founded in the seventh century BC. Another famous Greek colony and cultural center on the coast was Apollonia.

The Illyrian inward boundaries were never clearly defined, but they included part of the modern Slovenia, Dalmatia, Bosnia, Montenegro, part of Serbia, Albania and part of Greece. Due to the loose tribal organization and lack of a central authority, the Illyrians were unable to create a strong national State. Chieftains, chosen by the councils of elders used to extend their rule over the neighbouring tribes and establish short-lived kingdoms.

Agriculture, warfare and piracy were the characteristic features of the Illyrian way of life, but they were by no means totally uncouth. Illyrian friezes have been discovered near the present day Slovenian Capital, Ljubljana, representing ritual sacrifices, battles and sporting events.

The Illyrian culture is characterized by the archaeological remains, representative of a period of transition from the Bronze Age to the Iron Age, towards the end of the second millennium BC, comparable to the Hallstatt culture in Central Europe, usually associated with the Celtic population.

The arrival of the Illyrians in the Balkans, in the thirteenth century BC, is coincident with



the fall of Troy and a large-scale westward migration movement of peoples from the eastern Mediterranean, by the end of the Bronze Age.

Evidence of Illyrian migration from Asia Minor is found in several ancient texts. In Homer's *Iliad*, *Dardanian* allies were fighting alongside with the Trojans, against the Achaeans (Greek), at the time of the Trojan War. There were no other people named Dardanians but the tribe of Illyria. They could have been akin to the Trojans or Trojans straightforward, since Dardanus was the mythical founder of Troy and ancestor to the Dardanians, as stated in the *Iliad*. In addition, archaeological finds in the vicinity of the ancient Troy have been recognized as Illyrian prototype.

A piece of an ancient Egyptian hieroglyphic writing also supports the idea of the Illyrian origin in Asia Minor. In the thirteenth century BC, Ramses the Great of Egypt fought a battle with the Hittites and their allies, recorded by the Egyptians as "Drdny." Again, there were no other people with a similar name except for the Dardanians of Illyria.

Moreover, a connection has been discovered between the language of the ancient Phrygians in Asia Minor and the Illyrian language. So, the Bryges, an ancient Illyrio-Thracian tribe of Macedonia or Thrace, and the Phrygians would be essentially the same people.

### Illyrian tribes

Among the numerous Illyrian tribes only those will be mentioned in particular, who inhabited the western part of the Balkan peninsula for over two thousand years and left behind their names in the local geography or in the collective memory of their Slavic heirs.

The *Liburnians* once occupied part of the Histrian peninsula (Istra), the northern Adriatic and its islands. They were skilful seafarers and soon became masters of the Adriatic Sea. Their swift sailing craft were eventually adopted by

the Romans and named after them "liburniae," in Latin. The Liburnian trading vessels travelled both Adriatic coasts, but they were also engaged in piracy and their raids provoked the Greek and the Romans alike. In the earliest conflict, recorded by Strabo, the Liburnians were turned out of the island of Corcyra (Corfu), off the Albanian coast, by the Corinthians. In the war with Rome, on the other hand, they were forced into submission to the rising Roman power.

The *Dalmatae* or *Dalmatians* occupied the Croatian coast. Their territory was part of the kingdom of Illyria until 180 BC when they declared themselves independent of Gentius, the King of Illyria. The Dalmatians were the last of the Illyric tribes to be subdued by the Romans, in 9 AD, under the Emperor Tiberius, when they joined the Pannonians in revolt against Rome.

The *Ardiaean*s, once an inland tribe, established themselves on the Montenegrin coast. In the third century BC, they were one of the most powerful Illyrian tribes. In 168, however, they were driven back inland where they disappeared.

The *Dardani* or *Dardanians* of Kosovo and southern Serbia, lived in constant warfare with the Macedonians, from the fourth to the second century BC. They were subdued first by the Ardiaeans and afterwards by the Romans.

In the South, in the present day Albania, Illyria remained a powerful kingdom with its Capital at Scodra (Skadar), until 180 BC, the year in which the Dalmatians declared their independence.

The Kingdom of Illyria had been created by Bardhyllus (385–358 BC), a Dardanian who nearly destroyed the Kingdom of Macedonia. He was succeeded by members of the royal houses of the Ardiaeans and Dardanians.

The Romans fought three so-called Illyrian or Macedonian wars. In the days of Teuta, Queen Regent in behalf of the minor Pinnes,



the unruly chieftains got all the freedom they wanted. As a result, the Adriatic and the Ionian Sea were plundered by the Illyrian pirates. The Greek asked Rome for help and in 229 BC it provoked the first Illyrian War in which Teuta had to accept the Roman peace terms. Ten years later, Demetrius, disregarding the treaty, sided with the Macedonians against the Romans. In 219 it caused the Second Illyrian War, ending with the Illyrian retreat. In the second century, Gentius, the last Illyrian King (180–168 BC) made the same mistake. He renewed the association with Macedonians against Rome and provoked the third Illyrian War. In the battle of Pydna, in 168 BC, both Illyrians and Macedonians were forced to surrender and it meant the end of the Illyrian and Macedonian independence.

For the Romans, the victory removed an obstacle to their territorial expansion in the East. Gentius and his family were taken prisoners to Rome and Illyria became part of the Roman Province of "Illyricum." With the subjugation of the Dalmatians in 9 AD, all of Illyria was united in the Province of Illyricum.

The boundaries and the size of Illyricum were often changed. Before 10 AD, it extended from the river Danube to the Macedonian border and the Adriatic Sea. In 10 AD the Pannonian territory was separated from Illyricum and a new province of Pannonia was created for the protection of the Danubian border. Soon afterwards, the name of Dalmatia was given to the ancient part of Illyricum. The lands of the ancient Illyria were divided among the provinces of Dalmatia, Macedonia and Epirus.

### **Under the Roman rule**

The Roman rule brought prosperity and cultural development to the Illyrian population. The Illyrian clansmen had to pledge allegiance to the emperor, but they retained their local authority. The Romans, on their part, established numerous military camps and

colonies on the coast, they built aqueducts and military and trade routes. Via Egnatia, for instance, connected the ports of Dyrrhachium and Apollonia with Thessalonike and Byzantium. The Greek city of Byzantium was made the Capital of the Byzantine Empire by Constantine the Great. It was renamed Constantinople in his honour. Later on, in 1453, when it was captured by the Turks, they called it Istanbul.

By the end of the second century AD, the Hellenistic ideal of Paideia and Humanism ceased to influence the Roman life. Currents of mystic oriental teachings were spreading more and more from the lower social classes to the higher strata of society until the Roman Hellenistic world got notably orientalized. The result was a cosmopolitical equality with the Romans, of all the nationalities within the empire. It brought over a denationalization and hastened the end of the Western Empire.

Although the idea of the government by the senate had still been maintained, the Praetorians in Rome and the legions in the provinces started proclaiming emperors their non-Italic commanders. The vigorous "barbarous" people in the romanized provinces were taking over the political and military leadership from the weakened Italo-Roman families.

The province of Africa was the first to reach its highpoint under the dynasty of Septimius Severus, called "the African." Severus, governor of the upper Pannonia, was proclaimed Emperor by his troops and governed from 193 to 211 AD. He secured the Roman rule in Syria and took Byzantium on his way to Moesia. Athens also lost its independence at that time, and it presaged the end of the Hellenic spiritual supremacy over the Romans.

Severus was not conditioned by the Roman tradition in his quest of power. So, religion became centered on the divine cult of the Emperor, the autonomy of Rome was destroyed



and the City put under an Imperial Procurator.

When people of the provinces were given the same rights as those enjoyed by the Italic population, Illyrian, Asian and African soldiers could rank up in the legions. After twenty-five years of service most of them, especially those rooted on the border, remained in touch with their legions, sending their sons to the same garrison. Severus dissolved the Praetorian cohorts and created a new Guard with soldiers of barbaric origin from the Danube. The opposition between the Roman Praetorians and the provincial legions disappeared and the passage to the Praetorian élite corps represented an advancement. It had, however, harmful effects on the combativeness of the Italic men who had to face the defence of Italy and Rome against the northern Germanic invaders, soon afterwards.

The year 238, with four emperors and a Civil War, is seen as the beginning of a large-scale Germanic pressure on the Roman Empire. Gothic tribes were pushing forwards on the Rhine, they also crossed the Danube and occupied the northern Moesia. Another threat was the growth of the new Persian Empire. So the Romans had to fight simultaneously on two fronts. It could have brought a collapse to the Roman power in a short run, had Diocletian not created a mobile army corps needed for the simultaneous defence against two foes.

### Illyrian emperors

The warlike Illyrians distinguished themselves as soldiers in the Roman legions and they were also a significant part of the Praetorian Guard. Their allegiance to Rome allowed them to move up ranks rather quickly and eventually they acceded to the throne in the Roman as well as in the Byzantine Empire. Proclaimed Emperors by their soldiers, several of them were also assassinated by the same soldiers, after a short rule.

In difficult circumstances, the army on the Danube made emperor the Pannonian *Decius* (249–251) who opens the line of the Illyrian emperors. Trying to block the retreat of the Goths over the Danube, he fell in his attempt, together with his son, in 251.

*Claudius, the Gothicus* (268–270), a Roman officer in the army, was proclaimed emperor at the death of the emperor Gallienus. He won several victories over the Gothic invaders.

*Aurelian* (270–275), born in Moesia, dedicated his life to the restoration of the Empire and to the general welfare of the people. He also started building a new wall around the City of Rome, most of which is still standing. It was completed by his successor Probus.

*Probus* (276–282), born in the Pannonian town of Sirmium (Mitrovica), continued Aurelian's work. He did not only lead successful military campaigns against the Germanic tribes but also made his soldiers contribute to the general welfare with public works, such as draining of marshy lands and introducing viticulture. War prisoners and subdued tribes were resettled as colonists. These works of peace irritated the military and Probus was killed in spite of his probity which had inspired his proclamation by the soldiers who were seeing in him "a brave, pious, restrained, merciful and upright man," so that he had been unanimously acclaimed: *Probe, Auguste, dii te servant!* ("Probus, Emperor, may Gods protect Thee!").

*Diocletian* (284–305), a Dalmatian by birth, changed his name Diokles into Diocletianus. He saved the Empire from disintegration, introducing profound institutional reforms. His confidants were made joint emperors or sub-emperors, called Augusti. The system worked for some time, then it led to internal strife. Rome ceased to be the Emperor's residence since the joint rule was determined on the basis of geographical division, with a local capital for each ruler. Diocletian himself exercised the unifying supreme authority. He chose



Nicomedia for his capital to keep back both, the Goths and the Persians. After a lifelong indefatigable activity, Diocletian fell seriously ill. In 305, he resigned the throne and retired to this palace in Salonia (modern Split), in Dalmatia, where he died in 313.

*Constantine the Great* (324–337) accepted Christianity and defeated the other Augusti. There were four at that time. In 312, he entered Rome with his army bearing the emblem of the Cross on their shields. Immediately, he issued his Milan Edict of Tolerance, introducing religious freedom. The Imperial Capital was transferred from Rome to Byzantium, renamed after him, Constantinople.

*Justin I* (518–527), born of Dardanian parents, was elected to the throne at the age of seventy. In his reign, the Slavs began to settle on the Empire's northern border.

*Justinian* (527–565) was probably also of Illyrian descent. He recaptured most of the lost territory from the Germanic invaders and kept the Slavs at bay. Unlike his illiterate Illyrian predecessors, he had acquired an early education at Constantinople. He codified the Roman Civil Law into what is known as the Justinian Code. He also built the famous Byzantine church Hagia Sophia in Constantinople.

## Albania, the last of Illyria

Albania, a small mountainous country in the south-western Balkans, between Greece and Yugoslavia, is of difficult access from the East. In the West, it is facing the port of Brindisi on the Italian side of the Strait of Otranto.

Albanian, the native language of its inhabitants, is closely related to the Illyrian, an indoeuropean language, spoken in the ancient Illyria all along the Adriatic Sea. The Kingdom of Illyria conquered by the Romans in 168 BC, was only the southern part of the region occupied by the Illyrians. Broadly speaking, it was the present day Albania. Incorporated into

the Roman province of Illyricum it was part of the Roman and later of the Byzantine Empire far into the fifth century AD. Then it was conquered successively by the Goths, Slavs, Normans and Turks. It remained under the Turkish rule until 1912, when it was declared independent. During the First World War, it was occupied by French, Italian and Serbian troops. Recognized a sovereign State in 1920, it was invaded once more and annexed to Italy. During the Second World War it was occupied by the Greek and the German until it was finally liberated by the Allied forces in 1944.

The sole list of invasions and invaders proves that a timely documentation of the Albanian language was of impossible achievement until recently. A dictionary and a grammar written down in a chosen alphabet are, nevertheless, the very basic factors in the making of a nation. The official Albanian alphabet was introduced only in 1909, using the Roman or Latin characters.

The troubled history of the country is unavoidably reflected in the language. As a result of consecutive invasions and long periods of alien rule, a great deal of foreign vocabulary, mostly Turkish, has been definitely incorporated into the Albanian lexicon.

Modern Albanian is an example of the revitalization of a language. The Albanian language is now studied intensively at the University of Tirana, the Albanian Capital, and in Italy, where many Albanians live. They co-operate in the *Studia Illyrica*, aiming at a unified national language, made of two dialects, the Gheg in the North and the Tosk in the South of the country. Much of the original vocabulary and structure is certainly lost or changed, but new vocabulary and new uses are being developed, in consonance with the modern needs of communication. And the ruling class are proud of being Shiptars (Albanians) as they call themselves.

The explanation of the Illyrian name is still controversial. There seems to be a connection



between the Illyrian name and the ancient mythological serpent known to the Hittites. And, in Greek, the root word in the Illyrian name means "to wind." But the Albanian scholars find their own interpretation more satisfactory. They argue that the root in the Albanian "Ileret" is "I-lir" which means "free," so the meaning of the name Illyrians would be "Free men" and the meaning of Illyria is "the land of the free."

## Two powerful neighbours

One of the Illyrian branches in the north were most probably Veneti or Venetians who established themselves on the north Adriatic coast and in Istra.

Venice, seaport and capital of the Veneto region, gained control of the Adriatic Sea and expanded its trade between Europe and Asia. At its height, the Venetian power extended along the Dalmatian coast as far as Dubrovnik (Ragusa).

Dubrovnik was founded in the 7<sup>th</sup> century and prospered to the point of rivaling Venice. Soon afterwards, both Venice and Dubrovnik suffered from the Turkish competition. Dubrovnik had to pay Turkey a tribute in gold coins, called "ducats," current at that time in Europe, in exchange for its autonomy. Venetian power in its turn was weakened in the struggle with the Turks, from 1453 to 1718. Venice fell to Napoleon Bonaparte in 1797, and became part of Italy in 1868, together with her possessions along the Dalmatian coast. That is why the Venetian lion, symbol of the Venetian rule, can still be seen on ancient public buildings along the Eastern Adriatic.

The *Ottoman* or *Turkish Empire* was a Moslem State, founded in 1288, by Osman I, in Asia Minor. It expanded through Asia Minor and through the Balkans to Thrace, in 1345. After the victory at Kosovo, in 1389, the Turks took Serbia and Bulgaria. In 1453 they captured Constantinople. They even reached Vienna in

1529 and 1683, but failed to conquer it. Jan Sobieski, King of Poland, relieved the City when it was besieged in 1683. The Turks were definitely defeated to return never again.

## Serbia and Kosovo

In the battle of Kosovo Polje (the Field of Kosovo), in 1389, the Turks defeated a combined army of Serbs, Albanians, Bosnians, Montenegrins and Bulgarians, breaking the power of Serbia and Bulgaria. Serbia became first a vassal state and then part of the Ottoman Empire. It recovered independence four centuries later under Karađorđe, in 1828. After the First World War it became the core of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, in 1918.

Serbia emerged as a principality in the 9<sup>th</sup> century, subject to the Byzantine Empire. In 1227 the Serbs crowned their own King. Under the Czar Dusan the Powerful (1331–1335), Serbia became the dominant power in the Balkans. But it was overthrown at Kosovo.

The battle of Kosovo is of great significance in the History of Serbia. It is felt as a national tragedy with its epic heroes and a Serbian Antigone in the battlefield. Kosovo is now an autonomous province of Serbia, with largely Albanian population. Its Capital is Pristina.

Serbia would have no access to the sea if it were not through Montenegrin ports. Boka Kotorska, Budva and Ulcinj belonging to Montenegro.

Ulcinj, built on a promontory between two bays, is the oldest town on the Adriatic Sea. According to the tradition, it had been founded by the Colchidians in the fifth century BC, but it often changed its name and masters. It was once ruled by Teuta, Queen of Illyria. The Illyrians were succeeded by the Greek, the Romans and Byzantines, Venice and Ottoman Turks. The Turks turned the town into their stronghold and held it for three centuries.

Maritime tradition of Boka Kotorska began in the Illyrian and Roman times. The natives of the Bay of Kotor used to see the seafarers off



(and still do so) wishing them *to have a safe voyage and a rough sea*.

### **Bosnia-Hercegovina**

A mountainous country, cut by deep valleys and covered with forests is situated between the river Sava and the Adriatic.

From 1463 it was a Turkish province until 1878, when it became part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. It was a Croatian province in the first Yugoslavia, a federated republic in the second Yugoslavia, and is now an independent state.

In fact, its inhabitants, Bosnians, Croats and Serbs, are finding some difficulty in living peacefully together, without a clear territorial division, impossible of achievement; professing the Islamic, Catholic or Orthodox religion; divided ethnically, culturally and often facing problems of identity as members of mixed families.

Sarajevo, the Capital and cultural center of Bosnia and Hercegovina, retains a strong Islamic character. The name of the city is associated with the assassination, in 1914, of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, Austrian Crown Prince. The unfortunate event triggered off the World War I.

Medjugorje, too, is part of Bosnia. Not so long ago, it was a small place "amidst mountains." This is the meaning of the placename Medjugorje. Nowadays, people from far and near, Moslems included, are coming on pilgrimage to kneel before the Lady of Peace—even in the context of a recurrent civil war.

### **Croatia**

Eastern Adriatic is nowadays actually Croatian, from the Istrian Peninsula and Rijeka (Fiume), in the North, to the extreme southern Dalmatian island of Lokrum. The Croatian culture, in its turn, is an integral part of the Centro-European culture and its farthestmost extended southern branch.

The contemporary Republic of Croatia is the meeting place of the European East and West and a link between the Central Europe and the Mediterranean. In the past, its eastern border was the dividing line between the Western and the Eastern Roman Empire, after their separation in the fourth century. Ever since the eleventh century it has been the boundary between the western Catholicism and the eastern Orthodoxy. For nearly half a millennium, from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it was also a military borderland between Christianity and Islam, studded with fortresses for the defence of the country and the rest of Europe against the Turks.

The Croatian land and shores have been, from times immemorial, an important place of contact for different peoples, their languages and cultures, such as the Illyrian Liburnians and ancient Greek and Romans. Prehistory and History can be read from the archaeological remains of the cities, monuments and works of art, belonging to distant periods of human settlements, long before the arrival of the Croats in the 7<sup>th</sup> century. The prominent characteristic of Croatia is its urban culture. The number and density of Croatian towns is far superior to other south European countries. The origin of Croatian cities is mainly Greek and Roman or Medieval. Each one has preserved its own character, in accordance with its particular period of foundation. The heritage of the ancient Greek colonization and the Roman urbanization, received by the Croatian settlers, is truly noteworthy.

The Greek colonization of the East-Adriatic coast and its islands dates from the 4<sup>th</sup> to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC. Commerce had brought the ancient Greek to Dalmatia, where they established numerous colonies, Korcula among them.

The Roman period has left a strong mark on the city of Pula, in Istra. Its magnificent amphitheatre, built in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD is the



best preserved architectonic shell in Europe.

The late-antique architectural complex of Diocletian's Palace is the core of the medieval Split. It is unique by the way in which subsequent centuries were transforming the Emperor's Palace into a city. The Palace was built in the fourth century AD. Within a peristyle of Roman columns and archades, Romanesque, Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque houses and palaces have been built. Diocletian's octagonal Mausoleum has been turned into a cathedral and a Romanesque bell tower has been added to it, providing the city with a vertical axis.

### **The Republic of Dubrovnik**

The beginning of Dubrovnik as a planned city goes back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Its well preserved city walls and towers were built between the 14<sup>th</sup> and the 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. The city emerged as an independent state thanks to its geographical position and to the diplomatic ability of its leadership. In possession of an important merchant fleet, it was able to compete with the more powerful Mediterranean cities and stop the Ottoman advances. From the 14<sup>th</sup> to the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century it was the capital of a free Croatian State, the Republic of Dubrovnik, now the Croatian Province or, in Croatian, "Županija" of Dubrovnik-Neretva.

Dubrovnik, ancient Ragusa, is the last southern Dalmatian port protected by islands. In stormy weather it could give refuge to travellers on their way to Constantinople or to the Holy Land.

Fresh water has always been of vital importance in a region made totally of calcareous rock. Stone is omnipresent in the area. It is part of the panoramic view of the country and used as building material of humble homes as well as of architectural masterpieces. In olden days, it was a blessing and an evident sign of wealth to find a fountain at the city entrance. Not even Venice could enjoy such a luxury in spite of its prominence on the Adriatic Sea. On the

neighbouring island of Korcula, under the Venetian rule, people had to use cisterns for their water supply, while abundant fresh water was brought from inland sources by aqueduct to Dubrovnik and fresh water irrigated the fertile delta of the river Neretva.

For these reasons the small city of Dubrovnik grew into the only serious rival and local counterpoise to Venice. Its 1940 metres long and up to 6 metres wide city walls enclose the renowned public buildings on its main street, called Stradun. But for a traveller, the best of Dubrovnik is that its churches, museums and palaces, including the Ducal Palace, symbol of its independence, are in walking distance and you may walk along the city wall with its 20 towers and fortresses.

The city was repeatedly devastated by earthquakes, fire and acts of war. Thus, the restoration has become a permanent responsibility of the government. Since Dubrovnik has been declared Property of Mankind, strict rules have been established for the respect of its truly unique image, harmony and homogeneity. If any restoration is needed, only traditional techniques and traditional materials, such as stone, wood and tiles, have to be employed.

### **Korcula**

In the strife for power, the island of Korcula played a particular role. Its Capital, the city of Korcula, was strategically located on the narrowest passage between the island and the peninsula of Peljesac. The old city, an ancient Greek colony, was founded on a small promontory to control the maritime traffic. In possession of Venice, the passage of galleys and sailing ships was easily checked from its massive walls and winding byways.

Both, Korcula and Dubrovnik were built on scarp, protecting their excellent ports. While in Korcula the narrow streets lead up to the belfry of St. Mark's, on the top, in Dubrovnik the streets



descend from the scarp to the main street and to St. Blases's, Dubrovnik Patron Saint's Cathedral. Korcula's Patron Saint is obviously St. Mark the Evangelist, whose emblem, a winged lion, is the eponymous of St. Mark's in Venice and the symbol of the Venetian domination abroad.

Korcula is the largest green island on the Adriatic. Its forests supplied with wood the ancient shipbuilding industry and helped its economic development. As early as in the second millennium BC, maritime traffic had been established with the Mediterranean.

Ancient architects used the famous stone from a tiny island Vrnik, off the coast of Korcula, in the construction of Dalmatian cities. The same stone has also been used in several modern buildings, e.g. the Basilica Hagia Sophia in Istanbul and the House of Parliament in Vienna. The city of Korcula itself was built of this stone. Korcula's fortifications maintain at present the same attraction power as they exerted on the medieval writers about travels.

According to the local tradition, Marco Polo (1254–1324) had been born in Korcula and started on his journey to China from his native town. True or not, he was a Venetian anyway, since Korcula was a Venetian possession at that time.

## Romania or Rumania

The history of the Romanian civilization is intimately connected with and conditioned by its geographical position as a crossroads. The country is bordering Hungary, Ukrain, Serbia, Bulgaria and the Black Sea. The Carpathian Mountains cross the southern Bukovina and divide Moldavia in the East from Transylvania in the West. The large Romanian oil wells are located in the lower Carpathians.

The only part of Romania south of the Danube is Dobrudja, a narrow low-lying coastal strip, extended into Bulgaria. The river Danube is an important waterway, connecting Romania,

upstream with the Central Europe, and downstream, through a large delta, with the Black Sea, which, in its turn, opens for Romania a maritime access through Bosphorus, to the Mediterranean and the rest of the world. No wonder that the whole region was an object of permanent interest for three large empires, the Ottoman, the Habsburg and that of the Czars.

The struggle for independence is therefore a constant feature in the Romanian history, from the ancient times to the present. Herodotus wrote in 514 BC that the Getae (Dacians), the autochthonous ancestors of today's Romanians, were "the most valiant and just of all the Thracians; the only ones who dared stand against King Dareus of Persia."

The Turks entered Europe in 1353. Gradually they conquered most of the Balkans and even reached Vienna. Thus, five countries of the Romanian history are marked by the struggle against the Turks, in which Wallachia, Moldavia and Transylvania, the three Romanian Principalities were engaged. Their territory had never been conquered, but they retained their autonomy and the right to choose their own princes, in exchange for an annual tribute. The fact is that they were holding the Turks back from advancing towards the Central Europe.

In the 17<sup>th</sup> century the power of the Ottoman Empire was declining and the influence of the Habsburg and the Czarist Empires was growing. Romanians found themselves in the center of new threats.

The modern Romanian National State was constituted, in an initial stage, by the union of the three Romanian Principalities, Wallachia, Moldavia and Transylvania, in 1859, when the new state was named Romania, but the present day frontiers were established only in 1946.

## Trajan's Column

A world-renowned monument on Trajan's Forum in Rome is considered by the Romanians their sui generis Birth Certificate.



The Emperor Trajan had erected this white marble column to record his conquest of Dacia in 106 AD. It is over 40 metres high and embellished with relief sculptures, displayed in a spiral stripe, presumably suggested by Trajan himself. One hundred and fifty-five scenes cover the surface of the column, representing a chronicle of the Roman campaigns against the Dacians. With great realism and every detail, they are showing the passage of the Danube on a pontoon bridge, the two commanders, Trajan and Decibal, their armies, armour and stores, but there is no text.

In 117, a golden urn with the ashes of the great Emperor was laid in the socle of the column.

Another monument, Trajan's Tropaion, was set up in the conquered land in Dobrudja or Dobrogea, in 109.

A third monument to be mentioned in this context is the stone bridge across the Danube where it is 1, 127 metres wide. It was built just before the campaign began, to provide a faster and safer access to Dacia. Its remains can still be seen.

## Greece

The ancient Greek were not the original inhabitants of Greece or Hellas as it has been called from the Antiquity ever since. They came from the North-East, towards the end of the third millennium BC. Thracians, followed by the Illyrians, were pushing them south. But Thracians and Illyrians never came into contact with the Mediterranean culture. The Greek, on the contrary, were strongly influenced by its superior level, compared to the northern part of the peninsula. The local inhabitants were permanent settlers, living in towns, in organized communities. While the Tessalians were still living in the Stone Age, people in the South already used bronze.

The Greek did not annihilate either people or their culture which they gradually

assimilated. The transition is reflected in their vocabulary. They incorporated not only names of places, rivers and mountains, plants and animals, but also expressions belonging to the local way of life. There are also remarkable similarities to the languages in Asia Minor.

As a result, Ancient and Classical Greece developed the earliest European civilization reaching its highest point in Athens, in the era of Pericles. But the Golden Age had its counterpart in the dark ages of wars and alien occupations.

In 146 BC, Greece became part of the Roman Empire. It was conquered by Turkey during the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, and remained under the Turkish rule until 1821. The Golden Age and the dark ages are symbolized in the roofless Parthenon, where remains of exquisite art contrast with acts of barbarity, to attest both, the human grandeur and misery. Parthenon was well preserved until 1687, when a Venetian bombardment caused the explosion of the gunpowder stored within.

A visitor to Athens would easily read its street names and find his way around the City. But doing so, he would be reading the names of the old acquaintances he had first met in the books telling him the story of our Western Civilization. Philosophy, History, Arts and Science, Rhetoric, Literature and Language itself are associated with those names for ever, and the vocabulary they had created has become an unavoidable part of our everyday or specialized discourse.

The Greek learnt to write from Phoenicians who already used letters in their writing. But their alphabet was consonantic. They only used signs for consonants because the nature of their language did not require signs for vowels; vowels had to be supplied by the reader. It was the Greek who developed the complete alphabet adopting several of the superfluous semitic consonantic signs for vowel sounds they needed. The addition of vowel signs to the



alphabet is the greatest contribution of the Greek to our writing system.

The semitic origin of the Greek alphabet is revealed in the names of the letters: alpha, beta, and so on. The early Greek also wrote from right to left or boustrophedon, ox-turning, in alternate directions, like oxen ploughing a furrow one way, then turning and ploughing a parallel furrow the other way. They used only capital letters, without accents or punctuation. Small letters, accents and punctuation were introduced later, but the letters, be it hand-written or printed, appear separated one from the other to this day.

There were several variant forms of the Greek alphabet until the Ionian alphabet was officially introduced in Athens by Euclides, the Archon on duty in 403 BC.

The Greek alphabet was passed on to the Romans most likely via Etruria. In its simplicity it became one of the foundations of our civilization in the variants of Latin, Cyrillic and also Runic script.

But written language is conservative and cannot follow the dynamic rhythm of the constantly changing spoken language. It lags behind in the true representation of the living speech and its sounds. Language is expression of concepts and feelings which cannot all be accurately conveyed by means of written signs. Sporadic adjustments of orthography may solve the problem in part, but the rest is a matter of interpretation.

Unlike Rome and its Latin which has survived in the family of Romance languages, Classical Greek has not originated a family of languages. It is continued only in the Modern Greek, divided into the common or Demotic speech and the Neo-Hellenic, which aims at the revitalization of the classical forms in the context of modern life.

The American School of Classical Studies has excavated the ancient Agora, so you can tread where Socrates or Plato used to teach and where St. Paul had preached. Walking along

Paulou Apostolou Street you reach the place where philosophical thought and revealed religion met first.

## **A mosaic of visions: the way we perceive the world**

Words in different languages never match up one to one. It means that the speakers of different languages actually perceive the world differently. In fact, even every individual person perceives the world differently, to a certain extent, according to his/her own personal criteria—inherited, adopted or laboriously acquired. Since language is a means of self-expression and communication, the self-expression is inevitably reflected in the very naming of whatever there exists in the surrounding reality.

A few examples in connection with the Balkans:

**Family names** In a telephone directory, wherever in the world, family names or surnames appear in long columns, tediously arranged in alphabetical order. But the striking thing is that the terms *family name* and *surname* are themselves revealing different perceptions of an aspect of the surrounding reality. A family name is perceived as inherited through consanguinity, while a surname is given to or imposed on a person. Names, brought from far and near by their present bearers or by their ancestors, make a society look cosmopolitan. But they also speak of individual adjustments to a new context, in pronunciation, spelling or transliteration, e.g. of Greek names. The spelling of an original name may vary greatly, and in different ways. At times, it is written down in the local spelling and its pronunciation is maintained unchanged; some other times, its spelling is left intact but the pronunciation changes. When neither of the two solutions is viable for the lack of equivalence in the target language, the name is rendered in an approximation to the original.



**Spelling** Ivanisevic would appear as Ivanisevic, Ivanisevich, or Ivanissevich; Jovanovic, as Jovanovic, Jovanovich or Iovanovich.

**Derivation** For the members of the family and belonging, *-ic* is the suffix for diminutive, meaning *son of*, and *-ov*, *-ova* or *-ev*, *-eva*, for belonging, M and F Singular, and *-ovi*, *-ove* or *-vi*, *-eve*, M and F Plural, equivalent to the Saxon Genitive ending (*'s*) in English. Examples: Petar Petrovic: Peter, Peter's son; Janovi: members of the Jan family; Kovacevi: members of the Kovac family. A married woman, e.g. Mrs. Smith, would be Sra. de Smith in Spanish, and Ga. Smithova in Slovenian

**Nationality** What nationality was Mother Theresa of Calcutta? She was born to Albanian parents as Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhin, in Skopje, Yugoslavia. The answer depends on the *law*. According to *ius sanguinis*, based on consanguinity, in force in European countries, she was an Albanian by birth although she had been born in Yugoslavia. Being of Albanian descent, her nationality was definitely Albanian. According to *ius soli*, the law based on the soil or birthplace, Mother Theresa was a Yugoslavian or, more exactly, a Yugoslav citizen of Albanian nationality, descent or birth. So, nationality and citizenship are no synonyms in the Old World while, on the contrary, they tend to be synonymous in the New World, often called "the melting pot of nationalities." Unlike nationality, citizenship is changeable in Europe, and it is actually often changed, through option or automatically by a new arrangement of jurisdictions. The people of Trieste, e.g., mostly of Italian and Slovene descent, were in the past century successively Austrian, Italian, Free City of Trieste and Italian citizens again.

**Minorities** Closely related with the idea of nationality is the idea of *minorities*. The term may be applied to different situations and is therefore easily misunderstood.

Miquel Siguan, in his "Bilingualism and

Languages in Contact, " proposes the following typification of minorities:

- Autochthonous linguistic minorities, left aside by the linguistic unification, sharing a common national project, like Catalonia in Spain;
- Autochthonous minorities speaking the language of a neighbouring country, but within a clear territorial location of their home;
- Autochthonous indigenous minorities, sharing the geographical space but without taking part in the national project of the majority.
- Immigrated minorities, distributed over the vast territories of their hosts, literally out-rooted. Integration into the surrounding society is vital and a must for them.

The relationship between the linguistic identity and the ethnic and national identity often differs from the traditional national states of Europe, where minorities are usually produced by rectifications of boundaries. In this sense, there is, for instance, an important Albanian minority in Kosovo, there are Slovenian minorities in Austria and Italy, a Magyar minority in Slovenia, etc.

**Common nouns** In examples such as "St. Paul wrote *letters* to Corinthians, " "St. Paul's *Epistle*, 1 Cor. 1-13" and "*Carta* a los Hebreos, " the nouns *letter*, *epistle* and *carta* may be taken as equivalent in meaning. In fact, they are equivalent to a certain point, enough for understanding, although they are conveying different shades of meaning. They imply a different underlying idea at the back of the writer's mind, in his ancestral mind's eye. In writing a *letter*, the idea is that of the *a-b-c-d*— of the *written form* of language. In writing an *epistle*, the original Greek word *epistolé* refers to what is transmitted, *sent*: one's thoughts, affection, i.e. the message. In *la carta*, there is a reference to the paper, that is to say, to the *material piece of writing* the postman would deliver to the addressee's home.

**Linguistic areas** Certain linguistic features of pronunciation and grammar may extend over several countries and different languages. Regardless of national boundaries they constitute linguistic areas within a broader context of geographical identity.



Features of pronunciation are often shared by historically unrelated languages. Thus, in Europe, the affricate "ts" is found in languages on the periphery: in Slavic languages, Romanian, Hungarian, Spanish, Italian and English, but not in French or German. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the people of Paris began to use the uvular variant of /r/. It spread through most of France and to parts of Italy, Switzerland, Belgium, Holland and Germany.

The Balkans constitute a well defined linguistic area in several aspects. For example, the Romanian, Bulgarian, Macedonian and Albanian, place the definite article after the noun, whereas historically related languages outside the Balkans, such as Italian, do not. The Romanian *lup* (wolf) becomes *lupul* (the wolf); *tratat* (treatise) becomes *tratatul* (the treatise).

### The Romanian Language

Among the Neo-Latin speaking nations, the Romanians alone have maintained their ethnic appellation derived from Rome, the capital of the ancient Roman Empire. The term *Romania* was originally applied to the territorial extension within which the Roman (Latin) language was spoken. The first to use the unifying name Romania for the three historically separated Romanian Principalities, namely, Wallachia, Moldavia and Transylvania, taken as a whole, was the writer Ion Heliade Radulescu, in 1838, but the modern Romanian National State was constituted in an initial stage by the union of the three Principalities in 1859, and the present day frontiers were established only in 1946.

of the Empire) to settle the conquered land. There they merged with the autochthonous Thraco-Dacian and Geto-Dacian population, living on both riverbanks, into a new ethnic synthesis.

Linguistic and commercial contacts between the Dacians and the Romans had actually begun long before the conquest of Dacia and they continued after the Roman withdrawal from the northern Dacian territory, in 271 AD. The romanizing of Dacia was carried out in a relatively short time. The fact that a hundred years after the conquest, in 212, all the free inhabitants of the Roman Empire were proclaimed Roman citizens, favoured their romanization. The process of romanization meant primarily the adoption of the Latin language, the Roman Law and Administration. Traces of the Thraco-Dacian original language have, however, been preserved as a substratum of the present day Romanian language, including the name of the river Danube. Soldiers of the Roman Legions, discharged after twenty or twenty-five years of military service, were usually allotted small portions of land, to persuade them to stay in the province for life. This is the fundamental reason for the continuity and the ethnic unity of the Romanian people and their language in adverse circumstances of isolation, far from Rome and far from the other members of the Romance family of languages.

The individual physiognomy of each of the Romance languages is determined by the particular evolution of the Latin in every one of them.

As for the vocabulary, the number of words



and prepositions, the verbal conjugation system and the sentence structure, they all have their counterpart in the Latin morphology and syntax.

But there is no definite article in Latin. Moreover, the Romanian definite article is postponed and attached to the noun, while in Italian, Spanish and French, it goes before the noun and in the written language, it does not form a whole with the noun it determines.

*homo* (L) – *mom* (R) [man]  
*homo ille* (L) – *omul* [the man]  
*fvulpe* (R) [she-fox]  
*vulpes illa* (L) – *vulpea* (R) [the she-fox]  
*nmanual* (R) [textbook]  
*manualul* (R) [the textbook]

The M and N singular definite articles are added to the noun by means of the linking vowel -u. The F definite article is -a. Masculine plural nouns add the definite article -i directly to the plural form, also ending in -i: *lupi* (wolves), *lupii* (the wolves).

Feminine and Neuter plural nouns add the article -le: *fvulpi*, *vulpile*; *nmanuale*, *manualele*.

In Latin, the determiners *ille*, *illa*, *illud* are demonstrative adjectives. The terms *demonstrative* and *deictic* are both "pointing at" via language, the first in Latin, and the second in Greek.

In the plural nouns, Romanian and Italian are sharing the endings -i and -e, while in the Western Romance languages the typical plural ending is -s. But the Romanian has four different plural endings: -i, -e, -uri and -le: *lup-lupi*; *tren-trenuri*; *casa-case*; *pijama-pijamale*.

In addition, the phenomenon of vocalic and consonantic alternation and an absence of fixed rules make things even more complex. Some of the nouns also have two or three plural forms for different meanings. That is why students are advised to memorize both, the singular and the plural of the nouns they are acquiring.

*strada* (street), *strazi*: d becomes z  
*iarba* (herb), *ierburi*: ia becomes ie  
*cap* (head), *capete* (heads), *capi* (leaders), *capuri* (capes georg.)

**Verb a fi (to be)** The present indicative of the verb *a fi* is conjugated as follows:

*Eu sunt* elev (Latin verb: *sum*)  
*Tu esti* doctor (*es*)  
*El/Ea este* profesor (*est*)  
*Noi suntem* din Bucuresti (*sumus*)  
*Voi sunteți* in laborator (*estis*)  
*Ei/Ele sunt* la facultate (*sunt*)

Notice that *sunt* is used twice, for the first person singular and the third person plural. There is no equivalent for the English *it*.

**Slavic influence** Romanian is the only Romance language influenced by the Slavic language which added specific and permanent traits to it. Slavic migrants reached the territory between the Carpathian Mts. and the Danube in the seventh century. The impact was felt mostly in the vocabulary. About 9% of the Romanian representative basic vocabulary used in everyday spoken language are of Slavic origin. Although the Slavs arrived as conquerors, they were gradually assimilated by the autochthonous population. So much so, that they learnt the Romanian language. Words borrowed from the Slavs were adapted to the Romanian, essentially Latin, morphosyntactic system and its markers, including the Romanian definite and indefinite articles: *un izvor* (a source), *izvorul* (origin, the source), *izvoarele* (the sources). It so happened because at the time the Slavs settled in the Romanian territory, the Romanian language had already been essentially constituted as such. It was in good condition to borrow not only from the Slavic language, but also from the Magyar, German, Turkish and Modern Greek, later on.

**The affirmative particle *da*** In the representative basic vocabulary, made up of 2, 581 words, 233 words of the total are of Slavic origin, as a result of the Romanian and Slavic coexistence and cultural interaction. One of the 233 words is, no doubt, the affirmative particle *da*, the shortest possible answer, contrasted with the negative *nu*.



Tu esti elev? Tu nu esti Roman?  
 Da/nu. Ba da/Ba nu.  
 Yes/ No. Yes, I am/No, I am not.

For the question with the verb in the negative, the answer may be emphasized with *ba*: *ba da/ba nu*. In Serbian *pa da*. The affirmative *da* is Slavic, used also in Serbian, but not in the Slovene language. Slovenia is bordering Austria, a German speaking country, where the affirmative answer is *ja*. It has been adopted by the Slovenian people centuries ago.

### Language of science and technology

The progress in science and technology depends largely on the use of written language. Findings of successive generations have to be transmitted in a precise, systematic and objective language to constitute a reliable and universally accessible body of knowledge on which further scientific research depends unconditionally.

The main characteristics of scientific language are: (a) the use of symbols, formulae, equations, etc., for clarity and brevity; (b) a growing technical vocabulary, based traditionally on Latin and Greek, now in process of a constant updating with mostly English terms; (c) the predominant use of noun phrases and passive constructions to avoid the vagueness and ambiguity of everyday language.

They are all centered on meeting the demands of exactness, methodical work and objectivity but they may also be producing a gap between the scientific language and the people's common speech. It seems, however, that the gap is produced much less by the new technical vocabulary than by the velocity of the scientific advance.

In the dictionary of any Indo-European language, there are so many Greek and Latin words or Greco-Latin compounds or their derivatives, incorporated in everyday language together with a large English vocabulary, that

elements from the three languages constitute a kind of lingua franca of our civilization.

The expression "It's Greek to me" often proves the contrary, since lots of Greek vocabulary are so utterly assimilated in our daily conversation, that we simply cannot do without it. We may even be unaware to what extent we are speaking Greek throughout the day.

We may go to the *cinema* or to the *theatre*, or make an appointment with our *otorhinolaryngologist*, or pay the *telephone* bill, and everybody will know what we mean.

On the other side, many people may still not have the slightest idea of what *cybernetic* means. This completely new word belongs to the computer jargon, called also cyberspeak, technospeak or technobabble, proper to a cybersociety, to cyberskills or to cyberculture.

The root *cyber* comes from the Greek verb *kubernan*, meaning "to control," the same as in the Spanish word *gobernar*, with the corresponding phonetic changes, yet recognizable.

The gap between the scientific and the everyday language is a kind of modern illiteracy, especially in the computer science and Internet. The computer illiteracy prevents a person from keeping in touch with the latest thinking and research, blocking the way to a person's full realization.

In fact, we live in a changing world. Heraclitus of Ephesus (540–475 BC) had expressed it in his doctrine of eternal flux—two and a half millenniums ago.

### Conclusion

A distant panoramic view is often needed for a better vision of a whole. In the mosaic of the Balkans, extended between the Adriatic and the Black Sea, seen diachronically from its historical dawn down to the present day, the outline of a few basic facts appears clearly visible:



- Illyrian tribes make up the population substratum of the entire Balkan area and even spread beyond its limits;
- The extension of the Roman Empire covers the Illyrian substratum with the name of Rome, so that, in a sense, Illyria becomes Romania;
- A radical change of the scenery is produced with the arrival of the Slavic migrants,
- Two isolated historical witnesses have survived: Albania for the Illyrians and Romania for the Dacian outposts of the Roman Empire.

On the other side, Greece has remained herself, unique:

- she had educated Rome;
- has alphabeticized the East and the West;
- has devised the rules and vocabulary for abstract thinking,
- has created the archetypes of human behaviour;
- the essence of her culture has become Property of Mankind, with the Balkan mosaic for her background, and
- St. Paul's Epistle on Charity was originally written in Greek.

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